

25<sup>th</sup> April 1970. League Match. v. Leytonstone (away)

## Leytonstone 0, Wycombe Wanderers 1

A TWIST of irony desperately near full-time made all the agony and frustration of Saturday's visit to Leytonstone worthwhile as Wycombe Wanderers picked up both away points to keep the pressure on Enfield in the Isthmian League title chase.

After the Blues had dictated practically every movement throughout the match without reward, it was only thanks to an own goal netted by home team captain John Charles that they could claim a win which should have been sewn up by half-time, or earlier.

The goal was as sudden as it was overdue. And even then it needed a full-back, one Charlie Gale, Esquire, to set the machine in motion with a long probing ball into the danger zone.

Typically no Wanderer was on hand to make use of the pass. But instead Charles did the honours for them by putting the ball underneath the diving 'keeper, Ede, for one of the least expected climaxes to any match this season.

The Stones barely had time to restart the match, before referee Mr. C. J. Boswell blew for 'no side'.

## Leytonstone 0 Wycombe 1

AN OWN goal by Leytonstone centre half John Charles 15 seconds from the end dramatically boosted Wycombe's Isthmian League championship hopes.

But despite their craft in attack, dominance in midfield and command at the back, Wycombe were poor finishers.

The goal which came with the last kick of the match was a tragedy for Charles who had been the key man in Leytonstone's brave defensive action.

By

**Mike Whitesman**

Long before the end, and despite Wycombe's painfully obvious superiority, a draw had seemed the preordained result of the day.

In a nutshell, that was the extent to which the visiting forwards wasted their opportunities. Johnny Hutchinson's late arrival brought Geoff Anthony, still only half-fit, into the line-up as left-winger, while Tony Horseman's talents were soon stifled by the remoteness of his positioning on the right.

Keith Searle was a sporadic threat, but that was as far as it went. For in his experimental role in mid-field, Peter Suddaby was an unqualified failure.

Obviously torn between roles as defender and striker, the former Skelmersdale man was neither one nor the other.

Only three times did he noticeably go forward, looking dangerous on each occasion. But on a day when Wycombe were rarely out of the Leytonstone half, this was hardly an adequate contribution.

Meanwhile Leytonstone worked hard for a point, and came within a last gasp of making it four draws on the trot for a Wycombe side who never seem to learn from past experiences.

How often have the Wanderers drawn with an inferior opposition this season? Too often. And it is this weakness that could eventually be their undoing.

Big, bold Gale, ice cool under any circumstances, set Wycombe's attack up for the first real chance of the game in the 11th minute. He rounded a full-back before switching the ball from foot to foot and sending over a fine centre for Searle to test Ede's covering with a tricky header.

Ede proved up to the task and went on to give a confident performance under pressure, albeit less than should have been the case.

Intermittent showers and thunder storms made it even more difficult for Ede as rain often lashed into his face.

A 21st minute free kick by Tony Horseman roared over from the left and Delaney's subsequent header brought another excellent ground save by the 'keeper.

But Wycombe's most clear cut chances came in quick succession after the resumption. In the 46th minute, they tried shock tactics and rushed into the Stones' half in search of a lightning goal. But a promising movement fizzled out as Horseman banged a shot just wide of the post.

And four minutes later, a repeat move has Searle curling the ball round a defender only for Horseman to miss again, this time going wide of the other post.

Wycombe's defence was rarely caught itself, but on one of the few occasions, after 53 minutes, a lob shot from Dave Andrews caused momentary panic as it raced along the goalface with the home backs screaming unsuccessfully for offside.

Anthony and Blunt in mid-period brought Ede into action before Vince Faulkner replaced Geoff with 12 minutes to play.

Yet even the most optimistic had given up the ghost of a second point when, in the dying seconds, fate took a hand.

**LEYTONSTONE:** B. Ede; A. Jennings, R. Hames; D. Andrews, J. Charles, R. Walker; R. Cray, M. Thomson, A. Noonan, B. Harvey, J. Albon. Sub: K. Randall (not used).

**WYCOMBE WANDERERS:** J. Maskell; K. Blunt, C. Gale; I. Rundle, J. Delaney, J. Lailey; A. Horseman, B. Baker, K. Searle, P. Suddaby, G. Anthony. Sub: V. Faulkner.